DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 166 081 SO 011 389

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TITLE Feminism and Patriarchy: Competing Ways of Doing Social Science.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (San Francisco, California, September 4-8, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Context; Data Analysis; Data Collection; *Feminism; Information Needs; Knowledge Level; Literature Reviews; Relationship; Researchers; *Research Methodology; *Research Needs; Research Problems; *Sex Stereotypes; Socialization; Social Psychology; *Social Science Research; Sociocultural Patterns; Sociology

ABSTRACT

A social scientist's perception of subject matter is similar to an individual's perception of reality in that both are set within a cultural context composed of factors such as common sense and scientific fact. Variations in ways of thinking have particular ramifications for feminist scholarship. For example, understanding the importance of irrationality in the conduct of science and social science can increase concern with consciousness as a factor in social research and can encourage comparison between competing social science paradigms. To counteract the prevalence of theories which create models for man which in turn generate and verify knowledge about man and male society, women researchers are attempting to reverse the male-is-normal thesis. Feminist scholarship has evolved from an initial stage of imitation of male scholarship through a stage of protest and has arrived at a stage of exploring the feminist experience through innovative methodologies. The conclusion is that thorough analysis of the consequences of gender class membership and its effects by feminist scholars may well result in a more universal and more integrated social science. (DB)

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Session 98

NOV 2 0 1978

ED166081

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# Feminism and Patriarchy:

# Competing Ways of Doing Social Science

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting

of the American Sociological Association

San Francisco, 1978

SO-011 389

The focus of this paper is methodology in its broadest sense: how we do social science. Most of those who identify themselves as social scientists were trained in universities, and acquired there an image of the subject matter, an awareness of what constitutes "worthwhile" research topics, and skills in acquisition and analysis of data. These are subsumed under the multiple meanings of the term paradigm in Kuhn's (1970) work. Kuhn illuminates the conduct of science as a human enterprise, emphasizing irrational or noncontent determinants of the processes by which disciplines embrace and discard paradigms. Kuhn contrasts "normal science" (or business as usual) with processes of paradigm crisis and change.

Kuhn's insights are supplemented by those of Berger and Luckman (1966), which emphasize the consensual nature of knowledge and the crucial role of arbitration or validation of knowledge. The sociology of knowledge approach includes in its focus all that is taken for knowledge within a given cultural context--commonsense, sacred revelations, scientific fact, and the lot. Although the social world, like the physical world, is perceived as reality plain and simple, it is in fact a reality deliberately created through human agency. Individuals are induced to accept the premise of reality, largely through processes of socialization which rely heavily on language. Knowledge, or the conviction of reality is thus achieved; it is intersubjective; and it relies for its dominance over competing constructions of reality upon the existence and activity of a community which shares the same social construction of reality. Finally, knowledge is socially distributed: that which one takes for reality is determined by her/his place in the social structure, and the socialization that accompanies that position. A component of any particular construction of reality is the discrediting of competing constructions. In this sense, all knowledge is politicized; no new principle is required to cover the case of feminist scholarship.

Much of what has been written about science as a social institution applies to social science. However, claims that social science is distinctive persist

(e.g. Rudner 1966). 1) One issue that takes distinctive forms for the social scientist is the relationship between the scientist and the subject matter, or ways of thinking about subject and object. This problem has particular ramifications for feminist as contrasted with patriarchal scholarship. 2) Serious reflection on the subject/object issue gives rise, in turn, to concern with the question of consciousness as a factor in social research. To this deliberation, social psychologists have contributed little. 3) In social science, characterizations of social groups have repercussions for members of those groups. Moreover, social scientists are members of those groups, and characterizations have personal relevance. "Unawareness" of the personal relevance does not bestow objectivity; the converse is more likely to be the case. Some of the consequences of non-conscious ideology have been detailed by Mannheim (1936). 4) Another distinctive feature of social science is the possibility of an irreducible pluralism of paradigms. While the present paper does not aspire to deal definitively with these issues, they do form an essential context for a comparison between competing paradigms.

Kuhn has emphasized the importance of irrationality in the conduct of science and the succession of paradigms, but offers little illumination of the processes involved. Gouldner provides the needed specification. Gouldner (1970) emphasizes the continuity between the articulated, formal elements of a theory and its infrastructure, or the "domain assumptions" which inform it. Only the former elements are subjected to the close scrutiny of logic and evidence that we associate with the scientific method. The domain assumptions remain a "silent partner" to theory, unanalyzed and unacknowledged. Yet domain assumptions are powerful formulations which are attributed to every member of the domain (e.g., gender classes) and which, being acquired before the theorist has encountered anything like a true sample of the domain, are remarkably resistant to change (and impervious to evidence) (Gouldner 1970, p. 33). Gouldner's example is racial

stereotypes, but gender stereotypes would be equally appropriate.

Gouldner observes that "domain assumptions" can influence the career of a theory by their match or lack of match with those held by the intended audience of the theory. The theorist's domain assumptions can coincide with, validate, or bring to psychic closure the domain assumptions of the reader (Gouldner, 1970, p. 30). An "intuitively compelling" theory is one that resonates with the domain assumptions of the reader. Conversely, the theorist's domain assumptions can challenge or invalidate the reader's. The latter case is most germane to a comparison of feminist with patriarchal social science. The comparison is not between a committed or partisan scholarship and a value-neutral or objective one, but between two committed stances. Because of the potency of domain assumptions, Gouldner argues, all social theories militate toward acceptance of the status quo or toward change. In this sense, Gouldner concludes, every social theory and every theorist ideologizes social reality (Gouldner, 1970, p. 48).

## Social Psychology as Normal Science

Social psychology has a historical commitment to real world applications and to planned change. Nevertheless, the past decade has seen a movement toward progressive specification of limited paradigms and, coincidentally, the emergence of paradigm crisis.[1]

Argyris (1975) offers a compelling analysis of current social psychology. The "theory in use" that he describes embodies the elements Kuhn divines in scientific paradigms.[2] Argyris points out that the theory in use comprises not only a standard way for doing social psychology (a methodology of experimental control) but also a model for man; their relationship is circular, producing knowledge about man which can only confirm the paradigm underlying the research. The theory in use involves these emphases: 1) an emphasis on "rationality," operationalized in terms of suppression of negative feelings; 2) strategies of unilateral control, including 3) control over information and control over the meaning of what is valid

information (1975, p. 469). Argyris identifies certain contradictions in the theory in use: it requires rationality while supressing valid information; it requires verification yet creates the conditions for "self-sealing;" the subject (experimenter) is free to advocate his own position while preventing others from doing the same (1975, p. 470).

The short-circuiting of inquiry which Argyris documents for social psychology is endemic to normal science. A scientific community that is wedded to a paradigm is itself "self-sealing," in Argyris' term. The accepted procedures of inquiry are predicated upon the validity of the paradigm; no real test of the validity of a paradigm can be essayed from within it.[3]

Argyris' failing lies in not analyzing the paradigm itself. He fails to discern the patriarchal nature of the normal science he critiques. Hence, although his critique is potentially radical, his proposed correctives are in the nature of tinkering with the paradigm. Moreover, there are "good reasons," within the paradigm, for not adopting them, since tinkering with one part of the system causes perturbations in other parts, and threatens to "throw the baby out with the bath water." And although Argyris notes the congeniality of "the" scientific method with the theory in use, he fails to observe the domain assumptions which they have in common.

## Patriarchy as Paradigm

In Kuhn, the term paradigm is used with reference to a broad spectrum of levels of generality, from world-view to teaching exemplar. Here I use the term to refer to the domain assumptions associated with a social system which actualizes dominance of women by men, together with ideology, knowledge, and socialization practices which render such dominance expected, "natural" and "real". The specific manifestations of these domain assumptions vary over the realms of organized social activity. In social science, one manifestation is the perception of male as normal and female as exception, of man as essence and woman as accident.

This kind of thinking leads to practices which severely compromise the validity of research in social psychology. Investigators tend to prefer male Ss and use them predominantly (Carlson and Carlson 1961; Holmes and Jorgenson 1971). Moreover, authors are willing to generalize from findings based on male Ss but not female (Schwabacher 1972). When authors specify the sex of S, it is most often female (Schwabacher 1972; McKenna and Kessler 1974). It is not necessary to specify when the situation is normal (i.e., the universe is male.)

Research on the use of the generic "he" reinforces the impression of a mono-sex world: most readers do not construe "he" to include females (Martyna 19 ).

Again, Harris (1972) found that male researchers are less likely to look for sex differences in their data than are women. By inference, researchers have found out all they need to know about man by studying men; information concerning women will not advance scientific knowledge. In addition, there appears to be sex-typing of experimental situations or tasks, which is allowed to influence selection of Ss (McKenna and Kessler 1974). For example, most studies of power do not include women as Ss; much less does the normal scientist seek to understand power motives and the exercise of power in women.

Normal social science thus takes for granted that the human we seek to understand is a heterosexual white male. Because the patriarchal paradigm is taken for granted, the attributes of the normal are not often made explicit or systematically analyzed. However, the characteristics of the deviant, or that which is problematic, are analyzed. Because male is the norm, the study of females in patriarchal social science is carried out against a backdrop of implied comparison with the male. The asymmetry results in aborted comparison, which remains inconclusive. Moreover, the normal/deviant polarity results in a further error since gender is always invoked when females are being studied, findings are often attributed to gender without specification of the intervening processes. The converse does not occur: findings involving males are rarely ascribed to gender, and intervening processes remain

obscure. As Parlee (1975, p. 130) observes, "By formulating a problem in such a way that sex appears to be a relevant part of the description and by failing to include the other sex as a control group, one has effectively prejudged the question of whether there is a need for a separate 'psychology of women.'"

The male-is-normal thesis is contributory in the subject/object problem in social science studies of women, of sex roles, of sex difference, and of related topics. The study of women is relegated to a secondary place, in terms of scholarly attention, the allocation of resources, training of apprentice social scientists, publication, etc. Thus, for example, Gordon (1975, p. 563) notes that in history, the study of women is overlooked in political, economic, and diplomatic history, and confined to social history; moreover, social history has come to connote all that is trivial and ephemeral. The trivialization of women and "women's issues" is a hallmark of patriarchal social science.

Examples of viewing women as objects abound in the sociological literature on fertility, the family, and occupational status. Traditional treatments of women in the family literature have consistently foundered on an inability to see women as individuals: the unit of analysis is the family, but its sociological attributes are taken from the husband. Only a few years ago, the problem of how to measure a wife's contribution to family socioeconomic status was viewed as intractable. The feminist critique of this position has resulted, in a rather short time, in revision of the standard measure (standardized on males) and a handful of innovative alternatives. These areas abound in examples of direct improvement in the quality of work within traditional research agendas.

Other characteristics of patriarchal social science deserve a fuller analysis than they can receive here: the insistence on unilateral control which Argyris mentions; methodolatary in general, with its boundary-maintenance functions; the denial of the effects of power; the denial of value, commitment and self interest; the ideas of rationality and objectivity; and the double standard of scholarship.[4]

The Development of Feminist Scholarship

The major thrust of feminist scholarship has diverged from that of patriarchal science. There is general agreement that over a ten-year history the new feminist scholarship has coalesced around three distinct foci. Showalter (1974) designated these as 1) imitation; 2) protest; and 3) exploration of the female experience. Initially accepting the received paradigms in which they had trained, feminist scholars began to fill the gaps in knowledge of which they had become aware. They did not challenge the research agenda; they did not depart from the paradigm-orthodox methodology; they did not cross disciplinary lines.

For individual scholars, as for the Women's Studies programs which came to serve as a focus for some of their activity, the starting point for inquiry was often the recognized anomalies within the dominant paradigms of their disciplines. The study of women was seen as a corrective to the relative neglect of women in the subject matter. The "problem" was diagnosed as inadequate information, soon to be corrected. While substantive areas like the study of sex roles would remain, it was assumed that in most instances new data on women would be incorporated into the functional areas from which it was missing, and Women's Studies would fade away. On the other hand, feminist scholars became aware that women were underrepresented in the organization of their disciplines as they were in the subject matter. Thus, a stance of activism vis a vis the profession and the institution arose during the first surge of intellectual activity focussing on women.

However, in mastering the available information on women, scholars became aware of a misogyny as historic as the neglect (see, for example, Shields' (1975) review of the psychology of women which preceded Freud). This misogyny did not emerge solely from the formal theories in the many disciplines being studied, but also underlay them in the form of domain assumptions. The continuity between laymen's prejudices and those of scholars became increasingly apparent to those who no longer shared the domain assumptions the others held in common. It seems that

the recognition of sex prejudice--who holds such prejudice, and who are its target--shocked many female academics, and initiated a political awareness.

In rejecting distorted images of women, feminist scholars engaged their colleagues in a conflict over naming and the power of naming. The scope of this conflict exceeds the question of who is subject and who is object, including an insistence on naming that which was previously denied or systified, and extending to a critical analysis of the canon, the paradigms, the standards of evaluation, and back once again to methodology.

Early on, feminist scholarship showed an interdisciplinary tendency which remains pronounced to the present day. In part, the interdisciplinary scope of individuals' work reflects the search for data on women, which appeared scarce in any single discipline. In part, interdisciplinary comparisons represent an attempt to test the generality of emerging theories of sex status. In part, the interdisciplinary focus reflects the recognition that the study of women cuts across the traditional organization of knowledge which excludes women.

In each discipline, linguistic analysis emerged as a major tool for examining the "silent partners" to the formally articulated theory. Briscoe (19 ) notes a movement in literary criticism away from an initial focus on how writers have depicted women to a focus on why. In recognizing not only the phenomenon of distorted imaging of women, but also the functions it serves for its creators, feminist literary critics demonstrate a convergence with feminist scholars in other disciplines. A sociology of knowledge perspective is evident in the current feminist scholarship: an awareness which includes understanding of the structure of the profession and the role of self interest; a consideration of selectivity in the canon, as well as the canon itself. Moreover, as feminist scholars come to accord first priority to woman-centered research questions, they outgrow the methodology of their training period. Gordon (1975, p. 563) observes that to place women and the female experience at the center of human experience (and the disciplines

which codify that experience) would turn those disciplines inside out.

It appears that feminist scholarship is moving toward innovative methodologies. One impetus may be a cynicism about the subject/object assumptions underlying positivist methodology. Another is the necessity of accomodating data previously excluded from the canon. The focus on female experience has facilitated the development of the confessional mode in the humanities. In social science, a broad spectrum of methodologies is employed in feminist scholarship, including but not limited to the qualitative and phenomonological traditions. Perhaps the most compelling reason for methodological innovation is that the new questions require a larger scope than the microscopic inquiries of paradigm-orthodox science. For what Hobsbawm (1971) has noted in history applies in sociology and social psychology as well: the "new professionalism" brought a trend toward defining subjects of inquiry more and more microscopically--until the political and social context was quite eclipsed. Concomitantly, attempts at explanation were abandoned: when research is focussed upon the fine points on a research agenda which is embedded in a paradigm everyone accepts, the data base for which everyone knows, little explanation is required.

However, feminist scholars have observed that there is politics behind this tendency to shy away from explanation (Gordon, 1975, p. 564). The timing is not coincidental, either. At a period when the public is demanding information and explanations about social inequality, particularly as it affects women, the academic professions are unable to provide them, in large part because the relevant questions are not on their research agenda.

## Current Trends in Feminist Scholarship

It is clear that the tradition of feminist scholarship, while robust, is both diverse and developing. Moreover, it seems likely that while a developmental trend corresponding to Showalter's typology can be discerned, individual scholars often recapitulate this ontogeny in their own careers. Thus, anomaly-chasing and protest

are both prevalent in the professional literature which contains much work focussed upon female experience. No feminist paradigm can be defined with certainty at this time, but it is possible to characterize the corpus in general terms. Feminist scholarship centers upon women (rather than merely "including" women); it evidences a familiarity with existing research on women. It goes beyond simple description of the status quo, seeking systematic explanation. And it is concerned with the social uses of knowledge about women. Although not all feminist scholars have direct connection with public policy, they tend actively to take responsibility for correcting misinformation and the misuse of information. Feminist scholarship is interdisciplinary; the new scientific community which is being formed counters the parochialism of normal science. The work which is female centered tends to be independent of the patriarchal research agenda and of at least some of the constraints of the normal science community.

An inventory of the content of feminist scholarship is beyond the scope of this paper.[5] Clearly, feminist scholarship differs from patriarchal social science in studying experience which is uniquely female (e.g., childbearing) or defined by female gender status (e.g., forcible rape). Feminist scholarship also studies phenomena whose existence or nature tend to be denied in patriarchal science--for example, personal violation (rape, domestic violence, incest). In addition, feminist scholarship deals in distinctive ways with some topics which have traditionally been studied by patriarchal social scientists--for example, stratification; power; sex differences.

Time does not permit a detailed comparison between feminist and patriarchal social science and the relationships between the two communities. An important contrast lies in the neglect and analysis, respectively, of the social context of individual behavior. Paradoxically, a more universal and more integrated social science may well come from that group which is criticized for its "narrowness" in studying women. By thorough analysis of the consequences of gender class

membership and the conditions under which such effects occur, feminist scholars are likely to shed light on human functioning, while coincidentally rescuing social psychology by bringing society back in. A miniature comparison may be found by contrasting the title of Carlson's (1971) review, called, "Where is the Person in Personality Theory?" with Homans' (1964) address titled (more provocatively than he knew) "Bringing Men Back In."

FOOTNOTES

1. The results of the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology readership survey, as reported in August, 1977, illustrated (paradigm change) in process. The survey revealed substantial discontent among readers and submitters, which cut across their varying levels of participation. The journal was not meeting the needs of those who identified themselves with its ostensible content, and who apparently had become indifferent to its undisputed prestige in the field, preferring not only to read and buy a different journal, but to submit their own work elsewhere. Although technical quality of articles was rated high, more than half of those responding thought the articles published in JPSP were not contributing to the development of the field. In both absolute terms and relative to other journals, a solid minority of readers (about 25 percent) rated the current JPSP below other sources in terms of significance or importance to the field. Almost half (46 percent) viewed the conent of JPSP as decreasingly relevant to their interests. Half desired more content devoted to applied social research; 40 percent wnated more theoretical articles; almost half wanted to see more research from field settings.

   As Hirshman suggests (Exit, Voica, and Loyalty), participants will vote with their feet, or stay and fight, depending on the mix of positive and negative incentives.

   The report did not break down responders (only 31 percent) by age; to have done so would permit a test of Kuhn's prediction that paradigm shifts occur when a whole generation abandons the received paradigm for one it likes better.

2. Embedded within Kuhn's idea of paradigm is an epistomology, which is shared among members of the scientific community and which may remain implicit. This epistomology subsumes permissible and impermissible questions, as well as rules of discourse, methodology, and the accepted canon of research and theory. Curriculum, and particularly textbooks, provides the standard index of the canon in established disciplines. Argyris deals with textbooks in some detail (1975, pp. ), as do feminist scholars reviewing their various fields.

3. Advances in internal validity cannot answer challenges to the paradigm. Nor does the notion of external validity, as commonly used, satisfy basic questions of validity, as long as the same paradigm underlies the construction of reality against which "rigorous" research is validated. Argyris' discussion of standard methodological precautions employed in social psychological research illustrates this dilemma.

4. A longer treatment of bias in scholarship bearing on women is to be found in Laws, The Second X (Elsevier Scientific Publishing, 1978).

5. A limited discussion of this topic can be found in Laws 1976.

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